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Coastal Sustainable Landscapes Project

QUARTERLY REPORT: APRIL – JUNE 2014

JULY 2014

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COASTAL SUSTAINABLE LANDSCAPES PROJECT

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Project Profile

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US Forest Service Coastal Sustainable Landscapes Project

Quarterly Report to the USAID/Ghana Mission April – June 2014

A. CSLP Project Summary

Ghana's Western Region faces myriad land use pressures in its six coastal districts. Demand for conversion of forests to agriculture, cash crop development, harvesting of mangroves and other forest species for charcoal and timber production, and artisanal mining all pose significant threats to forests in this region. High unemployment rates compound these pressures, exacerbating unsustainable natural resource management practices and reducing ecosystem services provided by the Region's forests.

Most land in the Western Region outside forest reserves and other protected areas has been deforested and converted to agriculture. The current situation is one of urgency—to find ways of taking pressure off the remaining reserves and to improve livelihoods and land management outside the reserves. Coupled with the human pressures on the landscape, a warming climate caused by increased atmospheric carbon dioxide poses significant risk to the landscape. In addition to increased temperatures, climate change is associated with jet stream fluctuations causing irregular, more extreme, and unusual weather patterns and events. Changing rainfall patterns and amounts can mean droughts in some areas and floods in others. Changing phenology, distributions of plant species, and rising sea levels are some of the potential adverse impacts on the region from climate change.

To address these growing threats, USAID/Ghana's Economic Growth office has developed natural resource interventions in Ghana's Western Region. USAID's main initiative, the Fisheries and Coastal Management Project (FCM), has four components: (i) Strengthened enabling environment for decentralized fisheries and coastal governance, (ii) Increased use of applied science to inform decision-making, law enforcement and the implementation of management plans, (iii) Heightened public awareness of trends, challenges and successes in ecosystem management and stronger public demand for sustainable use and conservation, and (iv) Improved management of marine and coastal natural resources for multiple benefits.

The US Forest Service, under an inter-agency partnership agreement with USAID, manages one component of the FCM project. The Coastal Sustainable Landscapes Project (CSLP) will contribute in some form to all four components with special emphasis on component (iv). Operating in the six coastal districts of Ghana's resource-rich Western Region, CSLP activities target landscape level engagement with communities, non-governmental organizations, Government of Ghana agencies, the private sector, and international partners. The geographic area includes districts from the Cote d'Ivoire border east of the Sekondi-Takoradi Metropolitan Assembly (STMA) area, including the Greater Amanzule wetlands complex and Cape Three Points.

The CSLP responds to the USAID Sustainable Landscapes (SL) Results Framework by focusing on Strategic Objective 1: *Accelerate the transition to low emission development through investments in clean energy and sustainable landscapes*. The SL interventions will support the second development objective of ensuring sustainable and broadly shared economic growth in Ghana under the USAID/Ghana Country Development Cooperation Strategy (CDCS). The goal of the strategy is to support the Government of Ghana in realizing its goal of becoming an established middle-income country by 2022.

To confront these growing threats mentioned above, the CSLP intends to improve carbon sequestration, forest management, and livelihoods in the six coastal districts of the Western Region. The overall long-term impact of the project will be to *promote low emissions development in Ghana's Western Region by strengthening community-based natural resource management and monitoring*. The project will focus on the coastal landscape, including mangroves, other wetlands, and forests and agricultural areas (within and outside protected areas) all of which are managed under a diversity of land tenure regimes.

Ghana has seen numerous interventions related to forest conservation in the past, many with limited success. CSLP's primary activities will focus on applying a Village Savings and Loan Association (VSLA) model, a social entrepreneurial concept that has already enjoyed much success in Ghana, as a novel vehicle to maintain and increase forest cover with native tree species. The CSLP will work with existing Community Resource Management Area (CREMA) bodies or similar entities to develop their capacity to launch their own VSLA and oversee the loans to community members. The CSLP will apply the VSLA concept to provide incentives for farmers and landowners to incorporate tree crops on their land while helping provide seed funding for a revolving funding mechanism to work towards improved livelihoods. Wherever possible, CSLP aims to support women to manage the VSLAs and therefore more directly improve their livelihoods and those of their households. Additionally, the CSLP will help to demonstrate and transfer effective agroforestry and reforestation methods (technology and practices) to restore native ecosystems. The integration of the VSLA process will help to ensure that these activities reduce pressure on existing forest resources and restore degraded forests while improving livelihoods.

If successfully implemented, these efforts will lead to increased employment, improved livelihoods, better land management of existing resources, increased soil fertility, and increased carbon stocks. Moreover, improved land management and livelihoods will reduce pressure on intact areas of forest reserve, protecting their biodiversity and allowing for ecotourism.

B. Quarterly Report Highlights

This quarterly report provides an update on the implementation progress and critical issues related to the CSLP for the period from April to June 2014.

During the current reporting period, progress with project work planning included activities in the following key areas:

- CSLP community selection;
- Assumption of office by the new project Director;
- Recruitment of the Village Savings and Loan Association Specialist;
- Procurement of project equipment;
- Official registration of the project;
- Finalization of the project Operations and Policy Manual;
- Training in Quickbooks accounting software;
- Relationship-building with key Ghana government institutions:
 - Western Region Coordinating Council
 - Jomoro and Ellembelle District Assemblies
 - Ministry of Food and Agriculture
 - Environmental Protection Agency
- Engagement with non-government institutions:
 - B-BOVID
 - Hen Mpoano
- National Agriculture, Forestry and Other Land Use (AFOLU) green house gas accounting retreat;
- International Mangrove Workshop; and,
- Development of the Draft CSLP First Annual Work Plan.

C. Project Implementation Activities

Implementation activities through the three-month period revolved around several themes:

- Field staff spent considerable time interacting with communities across the six districts as part of a selection process geared toward achieving early success with CSLP-led activities;
- Two important personnel were added to the Project. The US Forest Service welcomed the new CSLP Project Director to the office along with a series of introductory meetings with project partners in Accra and Takoradi and a new professional, the Village Savings and Loan Association Specialist, also joined the Takoradi-based team;
- Numerous administrative and financial tasks were established and implemented to help systematize project operations and to provide clear

safeguards and guidelines for staff as important ingredients for the project's success; and,

- There were interactions with a number of key partners as the project worked to develop a common understanding for collaboration at both the regional and district level.

CSLP Community Selection

The CSLP team, in advance of the First Annual Work Plan Development Workshop held the week of May 19, 2014, interacted with more than 70 communities. The team then focused on selecting a subsample from these based on criteria outlined below. Communities identified for this initial phase of interventions, will allow the project to strategize for quick returns on investment where the team and communities may be able to implement key activities from the work plan that will serve as demonstration or pilot sites for future interventions.

The choice of communities to visit as part of this initial selection was supported with information from Hen Mpoano, who provided an initial list communities that exhibited land area that has been degraded (with bare/sparse vegetation) based on 2002 Landsat land cover imagery. The assumption with this criterion is that these communities may have strategic areas for forestry/agroforestry interventions where CSLP can have significant impact on increasing tree cover. The other focus was on CREMA communities and communities with NRM experience. Subsequent and additional visits were guided by field staff observations of the landscape as they visited communities already on the initial list.

During the first half of the quarter, seventy-four communities were visited across the six coastal districts. The table below provides the breakdown of the communities visited throughout the project area.

Table 1: Breakdown of communities visited

District	No. of CREMAs* visited	Number of communities	
		CREMA communities	Non-CREMA communities
Jomoro	4	19	6
Shama	-	-	10
Ellebele	2	11	5
Ahanta West	1	8	1
Nzema East	-	-	14
Sub-total	7	38	36
Grand Total		74	

* CREMA – Community Resource Management Area

The Wildlife Division, both at the Western Regional level and protected area field office level, supported the team's efforts by providing CSLP with a list of CREMA communities. Additionally, Wildlife Division staff also introduced CSLP staff to the CREMA executives and communities. The community-level interactions generated substantial data (Annex 1 and Annex 2) that is facilitating the decision-making process linked to selecting the initial group of approximately 20 community

intervention sites. Those not selected for this initial phase of intervention will be documented for potential engagement at a later date.

The strategy for community selection was developed based upon initial discussions held as part of the Project Work Plan Workshop held in March 2014. A list of criteria deemed most important to consider in the selection of communities includes the following and are highlighted in Annex 1 and 2:

- Biological concerns
 - Is there an existing high level of biodiversity or is the community near or adjacent to a biologically significant area;
- Restoration need
 - Is the area heavily degraded whereby CSLP interventions could substantially increase carbon stocks or has the potential to greatly influence biological conservation;
- Existing institutional capacity
 - Are there any existing institutions in the community that can assist with project activities? These might include:
 - ◆ Chief and elders
 - ◆ Faith-based organizations
 - ◆ Local NGOs
 - ◆ Government institutions (MoFA, FSD, WD, OASL, Customary Land Secretariat)
- Potential for success
 - Is there land available for tree planting, good reception of the team by community members, an expressed desire (or demand-driven) for alternative livelihoods, and acceptable land tenure systems; and,
- Operational feasibility
 - Ability to access the community throughout the year, limited disputes or likelihood of facing many obstacles to success.



Figure 1: CSLP team interacting with Krobokese community members

Staff Recruitment and Administration

Assumption of office by the new CSLP Director

The newly recruited CSLP Director, Dr. Steve Dennison, took office during the quarter. On arrival in Ghana, prior to arriving in Takoradi, he was introduced to stakeholders/partners in Accra by the CSLP Program Manager, Adam Welti. In Accra, they met with USAID/Ghana staff including Justice Odoi (CSLP AOR), Bob Buzzard and others in the Economic Growth Office. Introductory visits were also made with the Forestry Commission (Oppon Sasu and Edith Abriquah), CSLP's health insurance provider, and USAID/Ghana's M&E contractor, METTS. USAID/Ghana also helped Steve initiate his application for a Ghana residency permit.

In Takoradi, Steve was introduced to the Western Region partners that include the Regional Minister, Deputy Regional Minister and the Regional Coordinating Director at the Regional Coordinating Council in Sekondi. Other partners met during his first week in Takoradi included the Regional Directorates of the Environmental Protection Agency, the Wildlife Division, the Forest Services Division (including the District Directorate), the Ministry of Food and Agriculture and the management of B-BOVID. Hen Mpoano and Friends of the Nation (FoN) are two additional local NGOs met during this initial onboarding period. These two NGOs were part of the previous USAID project in the Western Region, the Integrated Coastal Fisheries Governance (ICFG) Project, that helped define the current Sustainable Landscapes initiative that USAID is funding and of which CSLP is a part.

Recruitment of Village Savings and Loan Association Specialist

Recruitment of the CSLP Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLA) Specialist took place this quarter. From the more than two-dozen applicants who submitted credentials, three candidates were selected and invited for interviews. One of the selected candidates accepted the offer and signed a contract with the project. Prior to joining the project full time on June 16, he sought leave from his current employer and participated in the first Annual Work Plan Development Workshop. In his new role, the VSLA Specialist will lead the identification of village-level groups and assist with capacity building and establishment of VSLAs as part of the livelihood enhancement activities.

Procurement of Equipment

Table 2 lists the equipment procured during the quarter for field and office use.

Table 2. Project inventory procured during the quarter

Item	Name	Quantity
1	Air conditioner	7
2	External hard drive/server	1
3	100 m measuring tape	2
4	Caliper	1
5	Forest pro hypsometer	1
6	Compass-tandem global	1
7	Diameter tape	3
8	Laptop computer	5

9	GPS	2
10	Seagate Back-up Plus	1
11	Swivel chairs	7
12	Desks	5
13	Printers	3

Project Registration

The project received official registration with the Government of Ghana during the quarter. CSLP is registered with the Registrar General in Accra as a local branch of Management and Engineering Technologies International, Incorporated (METI) which is the contracting company working with the USFS/IP to implement CSLP.

Final registration documentation allowed the CSLP to open official bank accounts with Ecobank at the Takoradi Harbour Branch. The registration and subsequent bank account process is part of USFS's ongoing commitment to sound administrative and financial management.

Finalization of project Operations and Policy Manual

The CSLP team has finalized its Operations and Policy Manual that will guide human resource, asset management, administrative and financial management activities for the project and its staff. It has been reviewed and deemed acceptable by Ghana legal counsel and will be officially in place for implementation as of July 1, 2014. All staff are contractually required to read the full text and sign a statement noting they have read, understand and agree with the content. Suggested edits or revisions can be requested by staff to the Director for review.

Training in Quickbooks Accounting Software

Key CSLP staff were trained in the use of Quickbooks accounting software by Powersoft Systems in May. Staff who participated in the training included the Administrative and Finance Specialist, the Director, Assistant Director and the Program Manager. The accounting software will be used to manage financial transactions and to generate monthly reports on the CSLP's financial management.

Relationships with Ghana Government Institutions

Western Region Coordinating Council

The CSLP began interacting with the Western Region Coordinating Council (WRCC) as early as October 2013. Since that time, there has been a changeover with Regional Minister and Regional Coordinating Director (early in 2014) along with the change in Directors of the CSLP.

- Upon assuming his post, the new CSLP Director was introduced to the new Minister, the Deputy Minister and the new Regional Coordinating Director. At that meeting in early May the project expressed its interest in forging strong collaboration with the WRCC and the agencies under its tutelage. From its side, the WRCC expressed concern about the project's focus on only the six



coastal districts with no provision for working within all the Region’s districts. Additionally, there was some concern about the lack of available information about previous visits/contact with CSLP.

Responding to the first concern, the CSLP team explained how it is part of a larger development effort building on the lessons and experiences of previous USAID investments and the desire to now address coastal biodiversity, forestry and fisheries more effectively. On the second issue, it was agreed that a meeting of all the relevant stakeholders be organized with an aim to highlighting the common objectives of CSLP and Western Region government agencies as well as clarifying expectations for all the parties involved. To this end, the CSLP submitted a letter of introduction and requested permission to organize a regional stakeholders’ meeting.

The process of organizing the regional government stakeholders meeting took a substantial amount of time and effort on the part of the team during this quarter. The process, which began in early May concluded with a fruitful First Regional Stakeholders Meeting held in Takoradi on June 23, hosted by the CSLP at the Akroma Plaza. The meeting was well attended (the participants are listed below) and positive support was received from the WRCC and the other attendees. The WRCC publically agreed to help introduce the project to the district assemblies and all members of the group agreed that it would be best if the parties continue to meet quarterly to review the project’s progress, discuss issues of common concern and seek ways for efficient collaboration.

First CSLP Regional Stakeholder Meeting June 23, 2014, Takoradi	
<u>Stakeholder entity</u>	<u>Represented by</u>
Economic Planning Unit	The Head
Environmental Protection Agency	The Regional Director
Forestry Commission-Forest Services Division	The Regional Director
Forestry Commission-Wildlife Division	The Regional Director
Hen Mpoano (NGO)	The Program Director & Fisheries Officer
Ministry of Food and Agriculture	The Regional Director
Town and Country Planning Department	The Head
Western Region Coordinating Council	The Acting Executive Director
CSLP	The Director, Asst. Director, & Admin/Finance Specialist

As a follow on to the Stakeholders Meeting, CSLP has requested a letter of introduction from the WRCC that can be used as a formal introduction with the district assemblies, district government offices and traditional chiefs. Given the critical role WRCC plays in overseeing and coordinating across government entities in the Western Region, including serving as a liaison to CSLP, the project is keen to have this formal letter available for use as we further our field activities across the districts.



In addition, formal Letters of Intent (LoIs) have been signed with the Forestry Commission represented regionally by the Forest Services Division and the Wildlife Division. Draft letters have also been circulated but not signed with the EPA and MoFA (see below). CSLP will now work with the Economic Planning Unit and Town and Country Planning Department to engage their formal commitment as well.

Ministry of Food and Agriculture, Western Region (MoFA)

The Regional Directorate of the Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MOFA) is interacting favorably with CSLP. The interactions began in November 2013 for a LoI to guide the two parties. The draft LoI was submitted in December 2013. This was followed by a delay caused by a change in leadership and the subsequent review of what had transpired earlier. In late March 2014, the LoI process was re-visited and MoFA suggested additional comments and changes in the Letter. These have been accommodated and the CSLP is now awaiting the directorate's final decision and hopefully a signed letter soon.

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

The pursuit of a signed LoI between the CSLP and the EPA in the Western Region started in December 2013 as well. A final draft was concluded in late March 2014 and was forwarded to the EPA Headquarters in Accra for review by the Executive Director who will ultimately sign the document. The WR Director of EPA noted some clarifications requested by the Executive Director. The CSLP responded to the request early in the quarter, but the Regional Directorate has not received a final decision on the document's signing. As the quarter closes, it appears that the best option (with the Regional Director's blessing) will be for the CSLP to interact directly with the EPA Executive Director in Accra. Following the Regional Stakeholder Meeting at the end of the quarter, the CSLP team is working with the Regional Director to obtain a signed document. Fieldwork with the EPA is about to begin and the formal agreement will facilitate CSLP's actions in the districts.

Visits with Jomoro and Ellembelle District Assemblies

Following an initial meeting with the Forest Services Division's Tarkwa Forest District Manager, he arranged for the CSLP team to meet the management staff of Jomoro and Ellembelle districts and learn of the project's plans. At district assembly offices in Half Assini and Nkroful, the team interacted with the District Chief Executive (DCE), the District Coordinating Director, Community Development Officer, and the Physical and Development Planners. Additionally, the team met the Deputy District Coordinating Director and the Budget Officer for the Ellembelle District Assembly.

The District Forest Manager informed the district staff of the startup of the CSLP while the CSLP team explained what is expected to be achieved within the three year life-of-project period. The team also discussed with the staff of the two districts which chapters of the Medium Term Development Planning Guidelines that the CSLP is most likely to help address.

In both offices, the District Chief Executives were excited and promised their support to ensure success. In Ellembelle District, the Development Planner was nominated during the meeting to become the CSLP's contact person in the District Assembly. The CSLP was advised to ensure an effective information sharing strategy is carried

out in order to nurture fruitful collaboration (for instance, the districts should be involved in the invitation of participants for the planned inception meetings in order to ensure that the right stakeholders are involved).

Engagement with Other Non-Government Institutions

B-BOVID/TRACTOR

B-BOVID is a Ghanaian agricultural business institution that is based on social entrepreneurship principles helping to promote socially responsible commercial and ecological farming. B-BOVID has a non-profit arm, TRACTOR, working with community-based groups to build capacity for implementing the model on their own private farms. This unique partnership creates an outreach opportunity for CSLP.



Figure 2: Lower reservoir at B-BOVID's farm in Ango

A Letter of Intent between B-BOVID/TRACTOR and the CSLP to facilitate demonstration of eco-friendly farming on B-BOVID sites and through training with their network of out-grower farmers, was signed during the quarter (April 2014). The entire CSLP team has visited the B-BOVID headquarters and plantation sites to better understand their

goals and operation and to assess what opportunities exist for agroforestry and forestry ventures. At their behest, CSLP prepared an initial prospectus for activities at the B-BOVID farm/plantation site in Ango (outside of Sekondi). As the quarter ends, specific agroforestry and conservation plantings have been outlined for private farmers working on the site. It is anticipated that these will serve as practical demonstration activities for other local farmers and as a means of examining the carbon stocks on a smaller scale—both before and after the specific activities are implemented. This is a practical and hands-on opportunity for both B-BOVID and the CSLP.

Hen Mpoano

Since the last quarter, CSLP has held a series of meetings with Hen Mpoano. The aim of these discussions has been to utilize the experience and knowledge they gained under the Integrated Coastal Fisheries Governance (ICFG) Project (completed in January 2014), to help meet CSLP objectives in two key areas. The first is linked to monitoring carbon stocks in the region and the second is to address sustainable landscapes issues and community livelihoods impacted by more formal biodiversity

conservation in the Greater Amanzule Wetland (GAW) area. The GAW spans three of the six districts in the CSLP geographic area.

Other background relevant to the discussions included the following points:

- Through June of 2013, Hen Mpoano worked to put the building blocks in place for a co-management structure that would provide for the sustainable use of the resources in the GAW.
- Significant among these were awareness creation activities that sought to join the communities with other relevant stakeholders of the GAW. These included the Ghana Wildlife Society (GWS), the Wildlife Division, District Assemblies and traditional authorities.
- The ICFG/Hen Mpoano consortia (University of Rhode Island, Coastal Resources Center, Friends of the Nation, WorldFish, and Sustainamatrix) worked with the communities and stakeholders mentioned above to craft a model for organizing all the interests of the GAW. This was basically a hybrid of the well-known Community Resource Management Areas (CREMAs) and another model in use in the Amanzule, the Project Management Committee (PMC).
- Guiding principles, membership, stakeholder roles, meetings, committee functions and an overall mandate were developed before funding for the ICFG terminated.
- It does not appear that there has been any more movement since that time (June 2013). It is not known if the stakeholders have been able to organize any additional meetings among themselves.

Given this background and the current stagnation of forward progress by the co-management efforts in the GAW, the CSLP and Hen Mpoano hope to achieve the following outcomes by July 2016:

- Working with the communities of the Greater Amanzule and the Working Group structure they created, have acceptable and **practical governance guidelines crafted** for their structure;
- Using the governance structure, support and advice of the professional and technical services in the three districts, have in place a **functioning management structure** for the GAW; and,
- Ensuring that management structure is responsible for a **GAW Management Plan** and that it is **being implemented**.

In order to achieve these goals, Hen Mpoano, the CSLP, and a host of others need to carefully coordinate and work together.

With a focus on the two topic areas identified, Hen Mpoano agreed to submit proposals and a budget for what they could offer for the following:

- ◆ GIS and Spatial Data services within the six coastal districts involving:
 - Establishing baseline land use/land cover maps for carbon determination
 - Digitizing of land use/land cover maps and estimating area
 - Uploading/updating meta data in GIS in the CSLP intervention areas

- ◆ Continuing with the awareness activities of Greater Amanzule Wetlands (from where CRC-URI left off) that were aimed at co-management of the natural resources in the GAW that are the basis of survival for a significant number of communities.

A third task, which may be beyond the financial scope of CSLP, is one that would directly link these efforts to a formal process for recognition of the GAW as a unique biodiversity or protected area. The goal would be to develop a draft management plan, which may be comprised of numerous sub-plans, and then work to ensure its implementation using adaptive management approaches for the GAW.

The CSLP can also invest some staff time and resources, where appropriate, with district level stakeholders in the three districts that cover the GAW and help to introduce alternative (and/or improved) livelihood strategies with the 23 communities that make up the wetlands. This provides an excellent opportunity for the CSLP to have a wider impact, especially in terms of avoided deforestation/ degradation, in an extensive and important wetland area—one that contributes significantly to carbon sequestration and food security in the coastal communities of the Western Region.

The specific outputs, timeline, interim milestones and monitoring details for a formal agreement between Hen Mpoano and the CSLP are expected to be worked out early in the next quarter.

International and National Meetings

National AFOLU Greenhouse Gas Accounting Retreat

The third National Greenhouse Gas Inventory Accounting Retreat for Agriculture, Forestry and Other Land Uses (AFOLU), jointly organized by the Environmental Protection Agency, the Forestry Commission's Resource Management Support Center and the Ministry of Food and Agriculture, was held in Kumasi from May 24-31, 2014. In addition to the CSLP representative, members include staff of the Ghana REDD+ secretariat and faculty of the University of Ghana and Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology.

The CSLP's Environmental Services and Spatial Planning Specialist participated in this meeting as the only non-governmental representative. The meeting focused on:

- Completing the AFOLU analysis and report writing;
- Beginning work on AFOLU's mitigation assessment; and,
- Assessing the effects of AFOLU's mitigation actions.

The meeting offered the opportunity for CSLP to remain up to date on national issues and standards concerning REDD+ and carbon measurement. It also facilitates a channel for CSLP to directly contribute to national policy formulation as well as providing an opportunity to leverage data, experiences and methodologies that will facilitate its own activities on the ground. There is discussion for the next meeting to be held at the CSLP office premises of CSLP in Takoradi during the upcoming quarter.

International Mangroves Workshop

A West African workshop on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation (REDD+) and Mangroves was held in the Central Region of Ghana, May 18-22, 2014. The workshop was organized by the Forest Carbon, Markets and Communities (FCMC) Program, a USAID-funded project. The workshop was implemented in collaboration with the US Forest Service International Programs (USFS-IP). The main goal of the workshop was to increase awareness and the importance of mangroves for climate change adaptation and mitigation within the context of REDD+. Members of national governments, civil society and non-governmental organizations, research institutions and academia, USAID and the USFS-IP were in attendance.

Environmental Services and Spatial Planning Specialist, Nicholas Jengre represented the CSLP at the workshop. Nicholas presented on the topic of Mangroves in Coastal Planning and Management – The Case of Ghana. He used this platform to inform other participants about the efforts being planned by CSLP towards a landscape-wide management/restoration of mangroves, degraded areas, and the strategy to use regeneration and enrichment planting of trees on farmlands to increase carbon stocks.

D. Monitoring, Evaluation and Knowledge Management

Development of the draft CSLP First Annual Work Plan

The CSLP team, with the support of facilitator Steve Joyce of Training Resources Group (TRG), drafted the first annual work plan in a five-day workshop that took place during the week of May 19, 2014. The workshop also benefited from the presence of the CSLP's Agreement Officer Representative, Justice Odoi and the Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist, Ellis Ekekpi, from USAID/Ghana's Economic Growth Office. In addition to timely advice and insights from USAID's perspective, they provided the team with background presentations on USAID requirements linked to Environmental Compliance and Environmentally Sound Design and Management.

Part of the workshop was also spent facilitating a set of core values that would ensure useful engagement with stakeholders in the communities, districts and in the region. Key stakeholders (government, NGO and private sector representatives) also joined the workshop for an afternoon of reflection and discussion about the activities being planned. TRG provided additional training for the CSLP team on giving and receiving feedback as a core value within the project.

The main output of the workshop, a draft annual work plan with estimated budgets for main activities, is being completed and reviewed by CSLP. It will subsequently be sent to USAID/Ghana for review and final comment.

Monitoring and Evaluation Workshop, a METSS and USAID-sponsored event

The CSLP Assistant Director attended a two-day workshop in June organized by the Monitoring Evaluation and Technical Support Services (METSS) Ghana in Tamale under the auspices of USAID/Ghana. METSS staff specialists and USAID/Ghana's Monitoring and Evaluation Unit (Office of Economic Growth Office) facilitated the work sessions.

The workshop sought to address Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) reporting issues identified by Implementing Partners (IPs). During the two days, presentations covered the following topics:

- The USAID Economic Growth Office intervention focus
- M&E Reporting Mechanism
- Designing Performance Monitoring Plans (PMP) – Policy Directives and required procedures such as:
 - Choosing indicators
 - Challenges in establishing a baseline
 - Setting targets
- Data Quality Assessment
- Annual Performance Plan Report
- Feed The Future Monitoring Information System

Participants came from all the IPs under the Feed The Future Initiative in USAID/Ghana.

E. Project Implementation – Lessons Learned

The CSLP continues to gather unique experiences and lessons learned as it works to implement administrative and technical activities. Its interactions with communities, stakeholders and the infrastructure of the Western Region bring challenges that are not necessarily unique to donor-funded projects, but have their own limitations as characterized by events and the operating environment in this part of Ghana.

Field visits

In its numerous visits to the field and meetings with local communities in the six districts, the team is learning about past project initiatives and individual community's regard or disregard for the successes and failures of those efforts. A key lesson learned is that regular/periodic contact with constituents is vital for success. As activities roll out and become more intensive, there is a great need for strategic planning on the part of technical team visits and to ensure administrative and logistical support is in line to support activities.

During the quarter, one vehicle has been used while the second project vehicle has been used to establish the administrative support at the office in Takoradi. This will change in the coming quarter (and beyond) as the demand for vehicles in the field will be considerably higher. A third vehicle will need to be purchased if the basic goals are to be achieved and the technical activities efficiently supported.

The rainy season has already thwarted some planning with local communities in situations where meetings have been planned in advance but swollen rivers prevented them from occurring as scheduled. This is often exacerbated by the poor communication/phone links in many parts of the districts being covered insofar as meetings have to be rescheduled (by physically being present, not just with a cell phone call) sometimes into the coming weeks. These limitations are helping the team

realize the need to schedule flexibly and to have alternatives at the ready whenever there is surplus time at hand during a field trip.

Stakeholder relationships

The CSLP's interactions with the technical services at the regional level is good, and as the LoIs get finalized, these will continue to improve. At the district level most interactions with district officials have been unofficial while the team awaits an official letter of introduction from the WRCC (see below). In some interactions with the GoG services there have been high expectations of receiving resources from the CSLP (usually based on experiences with previous donor projects). This may result in limiting the project's relationship with some partners when these expectations exceed budgeted ceilings. But every effort will be made (a) to prioritize project resources so that important activities will receive official support and (b) that key activities are implemented as effectively as possible.

Convening the first regional stakeholder meeting was a significant and time-consuming task that took approximately six weeks from the date of its first mention to the time that it was held. Given the important coordinating role the WRCC plays in the region, especially with technical agencies and district assemblies, CSLP is keen to build a strong working relationship with the council. Given changes with the Regional Minister and Executive Director over the last few months, CSLP has had to invest time in reacquainting the WRCC with the project and its history. Given the often-conflicting information received from the WRCC office, we have had to alter agendas, meeting venues and strategies; all efforts that have consumed a fair amount of team effort. Despite this, we are hopeful that the promised letter of introduction from the WRCC to district assemblies and traditional authorities will come in a timely manner. It will provide the basis for official work with the district level technical services. The successes, failures, and technical needs of our working relationships at this level will also be reported at the quarterly Regional Stakeholder meeting, next scheduled for late September.

Transaction time

Most staff have noted and commented on the greater amount of time needed in and around Takoradi to accomplish routine activities as compared to other cities in Ghana. This may be due to infrastructure issues, the nascent structure and organizations of businesses, or any number of other factors. The internet is definitely not utilized for routine business transactions to the degree that it is elsewhere in the country. Simple notices of meetings need to be hand delivered usurping substantial time, fuel and human resources and planning.

Obtaining quotations for normal purchases can be done in instances where the business is well established. Usually this means that the main office is Accra and Takoradi is a branch office. The cooperation and service orientation of these branch-office vendors is usually poor. They have a monopoly on the sector they are serving and not much incentive to improve their services or offer competitive pricing. Calls to the main office are usually simply referred to branch office personnel. Nonetheless, CSLP is adjusting to the circumstances and strategizing for how best to leverage limited time and resources to accomplish project goals.

Dumsor dumsor (On/Off)

This applies to all of Ghana but electrical power, or rather the lack thereof, impacts operations daily. The CSLP's small back-up generator helps to keep the lights on, the ceiling fans turning and the internet connected (usually). As of late, the office can plan on running the generator most, if not the whole day, for three out of five working days a week. This affects overall productivity of office staff and the budget line for fuel. If the scarcity of fuel issue continues or worsens, this will indeed affect the CSLP as its activities rely significantly on having vehicles operational and in the field.

Other administrative startup issues

The process of setting up the CSLP bank accounts took substantial time and effort—nearly five weeks to establish an operational GHS account for the project. Accounts are now functioning and processes being developed to ensure adequate planning for all financial transactions given that two signatories are required for all bank transactions in order to ensure tight financial control and oversight.

F. Planned Activities for Next Reporting Period

Issues to be addressed and activities being planned for implementation for the next quarter include:

- a) Formal/official interaction with district assemblies and traditional authorities – July/August
- b) Second Regional Stakeholder meeting – September
- c) Project indicator targets finalized – July/August
- d) Engagement with project partners – On-going
- e) Closer interaction with communities to identify sites and conduct capacity assessment – On-going
- f) Establish agreement/grant mechanism with Hen Mpoano for GIS outputs and awareness activities of co-management in the Greater Amanzule Wetlands – August/September
- g) Updating plans with B-BOVID at the Ango site and with farmers in at least one district – On-going
- h) Continued staff orientation with administrative procedures – On-going
- i) Complete the screening, interviewing and hiring process for an Office Administrative Assistant and a 2nd Driver for the project – July



G. Annexes

ANNEX 1 Community Assessment Exercise Sample Response Sheet

Community	District	Participants		No. of Farmers		Land Tenure arrangement	Rivers/Trees Status	Degradation	Tree Planting Experience/NTFPs Extraction	Food security Situation	Livelihood options	Gaps Identified to restore degraded landscape and improve Livelihoods
		M	F	M	F							
Fawoman	Jomoro	35	15	14	4	The land tenure arrangement is Abunu/ Abusa depending on time of acquisition of land. The tenant pay token fees to the chief who own the community. Tenants pay GHc5.00 to AOSL per acre per year. Currently land owners are taken GHc1000.00 plus for land acquisition in the area. The cost of land plan per acre is GHc30.00. About 80% of the community members have land plans.	The community is bounded by River Tano. Galamsey activities upstream have polluted the river changing its colour to brown. Most vegetation along the banks have cleared due to farming activities. Certain fish species can be found in the river due to chemicals to crops along the banks. Local distillers also directly discharge their waste into the river. River Ebopire also dries up during the drying season.	Community members consider land degradation as removal of natural vegetation cover, poor soil fertility, poor plant growth and indiscriminate felling of trees especially raffia palm and charcoal burning. Threatened tree species are Mahogany, odum, Nyankom, Abako, Bompagya, Ofram and Nkontanye.	The community has tree planting experience with other organizations who provided the seedlings. Few farmers have the skills and knowledge of identifying wildlings on their farms such as Odum and Mahogany. They use to extract rattan, snails, tortoise, rat, monkeys and parrots when the forest was available.	Seventy percent of household food consumption is acquired from own production. Households consume all food produced. Cassava and plantain do well in terms of yield on level grounds during their early stages of cultivation but yield reduces due to poor soil fertility. Women are mostly involved in the production of vegetables such as pepper, tomatoes, okro, garden eggs and pepper. Vegetable production has challenges such as lower yields due to poor soils, pest and diseases as well as poor market value for produce during the main harvest	Farming is the main economic activity in the community. 90% are engaged in cocoa farming and 10% cultivating oil palm. The farmers integrate citrus, coconuts and banana into the cash crop farms. With the support of FC/CREMA community members have been organized in farmers groups: Vegetable, Livestock and fish farming as alternatives to generate income.	1. Cleared vegetation along the River Tano. 2. Poor soil fertility to support food production. Soil erosion and landslides during the heavy rains. 3. Lack of skills to identify wildlings of common tree species in the area. 4. Lack of financial support to initiate and implement alternative livelihood options
Aduzuazo	Jomoro	35	12	16		Land belongs to individual family members which form the majority of land owners in the community. Part of the community land belongs to the stool: the wetland area. Land tenure arrangement is sharecropping system "Abunu". Majority of the community members do not have land title documents	Major river in the community is River Tano with its banks widening and claiming more lands. There is gradual clearing of bamboos cover along the banks. Soil erosion is common during the heavy rains. Water Hyacinth is invading the river body. More cocoa farms are situated along the banks. Other river bodies also exist in the community. These are Awulazule (spring water), Asabazule, Anhwifutuzule, Boyamea and Bozazule. These water bodies are threatened and some dry up during the dry seasons.	Reduction in soil nutrients, poor plant growth, no vegetation cover, reduction in yield of crops are indicators community members mentioned to measure degraded land. The community has wetland where it is used for rice cultivation, raffia tapping for wine and cultivation of banana. There are available sites in the community which are degraded	Threatened tree species are Odia (use to treat hernia) Danhoma, Nyankom, Mahogany, Dubini, Kubaza, Manenoa, Alevia and Bonsamdua. They use to collect Ahabayere, cane, mushroom and snail from the forest	Seventy percent of household food consumption is acquired from own production. 30% of household food production are sold at the market. 80% of vegetables (Okro, pepper, garden eggs and Atropo) produced are sold. Major food crop production are cassava, maize, cocoyam, banana and rice production. Production of rice is hampered by birds. Market for cassava is a major challenge during the peak periods	Main economic crop is coconut. About 20% of farmers are engaged in cocoa production. Production of livestock as an alternative livelihood option is common. Few farmers are engaged in sheep, local birds, pigs in addition to non-traditional livestock production: snail and fish farming. Three persons (Nicholas Baidoo, Adu Kundaa and Adu Kunjane) own fish ponds and one person (Anima Ndabere) is engaged in snail farming. Fewer farmers have intention of engaging in rubber plantation.	1. The invasion of water hyacinth to River Tano and drying up of streams in the community. 2. Clearing of trees and bamboos along the Tano river. Poor management of the wetlands. 3. Restoration of threatened species. 4. Capacity to maximize food and livestock production. 5. Ability to engage more community members in traditional and non-traditional livestock production such as snail farming.
Tweako Navrongo	Jomoro	11	10	6	6	Land belongs to the Chiefs but individuals have acquired the lands from the chief and also subletting to farmers. Tenants pay rents to chiefs as land owners. Subtenants have sharecropping arrangement with tenants and that is Abunu. Most of the subtenants have land plans for their cocoa farms which was initiated by						



ANNEX 2 Selected Communities

The communities in the table below have been selected based on information and data from reconnaissance trips to communities in five out of the six coastal districts. Earlier interactions with potential partners and stakeholders and study of district background information led to an *a priori* selection of areas for the reconnaissance. Nonetheless, about half of the communities visited were not selected *a priori*. In all, 74 communities were visited for the reconnaissance.

Even though most of the communities had natural resources management and forest landscape degradation issues, a weighted criteria developed by the CSLP team was used to select communities suitable for the start-up of CSLP's interventions. Some of the criteria include biological (biodiversity) concerns, deforestation and degradation, absence or presence of supportive institutions (e.g. CREMA), previous experience of communities related to conservation, tree planting history, and potential for success in relation to CSLP's goals. All in all, considering logistics and budget implications, the number of communities selected for initial interventions is 20. Some of the selected communities are geographically clustered e.g. Anlo Beach comprises Bosomdo, Krobo and Anlo Beach, which will allow for efficient use of time and resources.



District	Community	Description color symbol			Special Remarks
Jomoro	Aduzuazo	Yellow	Blue		Restoration of mangrove forest initiated previously with support from USAID in partnership with Pepsi Cola and Care International.
	Domeabra	Yellow			4 acres of land earmarked for tree planting by CREMA executives.
	Fawoman	Yellow			Galamsey activities upstream have polluted the Tano River; protection of streams as source of domestic water important for the communities
	Amokwao/Frenchman town	Yellow			Forest nursery at Amokwaw managed by CREMA
	Tweako No. 2	Yellow			Existing Farmer Groups Ongoing restoration projects by Ankasa Conservation Area, FORIG and Conservation Alliance, Close to Ankasa Forest Reserve (All these remarks are same for communities 2-4)
	Tweako No. 1	Yellow			Same as for No. 5 above except on-going restoration projects
Ellembelle	New Sanfo	Yellow			New Sanfo interested in bee keeping and already have only one bee hive with average production of one gallon per season. In need of material support to increase honey production to generate income to support proposed school project for this farming community.
	Ayawora	Yellow			Cocoa farms dominant in the landscape with virtually no forest trees present. Farmers seeking ways of integrating valuable forest trees.
	Nyameke Kpolle	Yellow			Same as no. 8
Nzema East	Bokro	Blue			About 50% of land marshy dominated by raffia palms. Sacred grove near this community.



		Asonti				No tree planting experience but informants expressed interest in integrating or nurturing compatible valuable trees in their farming. Cultivation along river/stream channels. First cycle schools interested in agroforestry and tree planting.
		Aubrim				It is fringed by Ebi Shelterbelt Forest Reserve (a GSBA).
	Ahanta-West	Tumentu				Chief has timber plantation which is currently being logged for lumber production..
		Aketekyi				Nearby Cape Three Points (C3P) Forest Reserve being encroached on buy illegal chainsaw millers, Identified streams dry up during dry seasons (due to siltation and cultivation along banks).
		Akwidaa				Nearby Cape Three Points (C3P) Forest Reserve being encroached on buy illegal chainsaw millers
		Cape Three Points				Nearby Cape Three Points Forest Reserve encroached by illegal chainsaw millers.
	Shama	Yabiw				Cassia plantations for charcoal production arising from communities own initiative. Inefficient method of charcoal production with very low recovery. Land for crop production is scarce. Possibility of growing vegetables in between felling cycles and coppicing of stand, possibility of improving this system with bee keeping.
		Anlo Beach Cluster (Anlo Beach, Bosomdo and Krobo)				Pra estuary, frequent flooding in Bosomdo, Krobo, Anlo Beach, huge interest in cassia for charcoal production which is actually on-going, vast stretch of



						degraded mangrove, FoN-IUCN have initiated some restoration activities on some parts of the mangrove forest.
		Sofokrom				FC has established cassia green firebreak around the Inchaban Waterworks forest reserve. There is an on-going arrangement with communities to produce charcoal from the management of the cassia firebreak. Enrichment planting in the green firebreak, management of cassia stand, bee keeping are possible NRM improvement and livelihoods
		Dwomo				Key informants indicated that NADMO, VRA, WAGP have plans to initiate tree planting program in this community, the pipeline stretch through this community is degraded and needs restoration attention. Land is scarce for farming purposes. Possible collaboration with the above listed institutions is envisaged.

Color	Description
	Wetland
	CREMA / CBAG
	Abandoned galamsey/ sand-winning site
	Tree planting experience